

**From the Chair, Chris Atkins:**

Our March Monthly Meeting welcomed over ninety people to listen to Richard Kay, one of our favourite speakers whose talk on Lowry was entertaining and informative. We also had the SGM which elected me as Chair, a position I take very seriously and will do the very best I can to ensure that we continue to flourish. Many thanks to you all for your votes. Behind the scenes our Committee work tirelessly to make sure everything runs smoothly and I very grateful. Also, our amazing tea ladies with their delicious homemade cakes serving tea and coffee, which also enhances the general feeling of a welcoming community. They cheerfully ensure everything is washed up and the kitchen is left as they found it. It's a lot of work for such amazing volunteers and they have our heartfelt gratitude.

However, it's our Group Leaders that I want to write about. They do an amazing job and their role should never be underestimated. Groups are at the heart of any u3a and we have many varied and interesting ones run by some energetic, knowledgeable and quite frankly amazing people. I have done this role in the past. It helped me to settle into my new community knowing no one in the village. It also did much more, giving me a sense of purpose and bringing new and solid friendships into my life. I hope each and every one of our Group Leaders know how appreciated they are. We are always excited by new groups being formed. If you think that you would like to start and facilitate a new group, please tell us. It's such a rewarding role and there is always back up from the committee. Don't forget the u3a ethos of group members working together so no one person carries too heavy a load.

Thank you all for your support. It is greatly appreciated by us all.

Wishing everyone a very Happy Easter.

**April Meeting on Wednesday 10 April, 2.15 for 2.30 start**

**Ian Munro — 'Impressions of Berlin in 1963, photos and first hand experiences'**

(See page 3 for an introduction to Ian Munro and important information about parking)

**Future Meetings currently arranged**

8 May — Caroline Brown, Retired Psychologist and Lecturer 'Our Divided Brain, insight into the way our brains work'

12 June — Joe Bleasdale 'Keep Bees Without Fuss or Chemicals. 45 years of experience beekeeping in Hampshire and Somerset'

10 July — Claire Wainwright, Cancer Research UK 'Breast and Prostate Cancer'

11 September — Fergus Dowding 'The History of Martock'

9 October — Greg Atkins 'How To Catch Flu'

13 November — David Sutcliffe 'Cecil Sharp, folk music collector, his life and work'

***Please contact the Publicity & Events Secretary if you have ideas for Speakers***



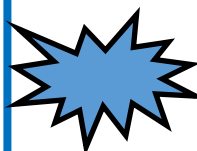
**Welcome to our new members:**

**Elaine Ashbee, David and Carole Ayton, Jane Jones, Jenni Stirling, Patricia Elliott, David Davis**

*We look forward to speaking to you at a meeting, please make yourself known to a committee member when you attend.*

**The George Coffee Shop, Martock**

Wednesday 9am — 1.30pm;  
Thursday and Friday 10am — 4.30pm;  
Saturday 9.30am — 1pm



**Celebration Corner**

**Happy Birthday to:**

Sarah Wellman, Pauline Norton, Gordon Maskery, Derek Coombs, Jill Coombs, Felicity Renshaw, Caroline Woodhead, John Woodhead, Philip Booth, Marian Farrow.

*If you would like your name mentioned, please let the Membership Secretary know your birth month if you haven't done so already (phone 07555 033027 or email [martocku3amembership@gmail.com](mailto:martocku3amembership@gmail.com)) Do you have a special birthday or anniversary coming up? Please let the Membership Secretary know so we can give you good wishes.*

**Dates for Your April Diary**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Wednesday 10 April</b> | 2.15pm for 2.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Martock & District u3a monthly meeting |
| <b>Saturday 13 April</b>  | 10.00am-1.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre, Martock — Farmer's Market                  |
| <b>Friday 19 April</b>    | Meet at 9.30am, Moorlands Shopping Centre — Martock Health Walk                       |
| <b>Friday 26 April</b>    | 10.00am-12.00pm, Martock Parish Hall — Come For Coffee                                |
| <b>Saturday 27 April</b>  | 7.00pm for 7.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Film Night 'Past Lives'                |



**RED LEAF HUNTING TRIP TO WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM  
WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER**



Coach — departs 08.30 from Martock, returns 18.00.

Cost — £32 per person, includes coach and entrance to Arboretum

**For more details, email Elizabeth Kirtley on [eak1208@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:eak1208@yahoo.co.uk)**

**£10 deposit required to book a place** — non-refundable unless trip cancelled, medical reason or agreement from Committee. **Final date to sign-up — 18 September** when full payment is required

## Introducing your Committee members

Hi, I'm Adrian and as you may have seen in the last newsletter, I have just reached 70. I spent most of my working life in Local Authorities, in finance, legal and finally in public health. In the last post, I was a



calendar 'boy', appearing on a calendar prompting waste recycling that was sent to every house in the district.

Later I became a civil servant in the CPS and then the MOD.

I was awarded a BSc (Hons) in Information Technology & Computing by the Open

University just after my 50th birthday. Music has been a passion through my life, going to my first concert aged 16 and 2 days – though the band broke up a couple of weeks later!

Alison and I spent our wedding night at a Pink Floyd concert and we recently saw a Pink Floyd tribute band in Weymouth.

I became interested in Modern Board Games after our grandson was given a game a few years ago. I joined a gaming group in Hereford and have built up a small library of games. So I was pleased to be able to set up the Modern Board Game Group for our u3a.

We retired in 2022 and moved to Martock to be closer to our daughter and grandson and joined the u3a a month after moving.

### **Parking in The George Car Park for u3a Monthly Meetings**

**We are allowed to use this carpark without charge for most meetings. But please put your u3a Membership Card on your dashboard when parking for these meetings. Thank you.**

### **An Introduction to Ian Munro**

#### **— the speaker at the meeting on 10 April**

After leaving school in December 1962, I joined Robert Bosch Ltd as an apprentice. Part of their three year scheme included a six month work experience at their main works in Stuttgart. Whilst there in 1963, I joined a club for young foreign workers and they offered regular week long escorted tours of Berlin.

The best way to describe my presentation would be part travelogue of the places visited, personal recollections and experiences of a young 18 year old plus details on a few historical events that happened in Berlin during the cold war period. At that time the Berlin Wall had only been up for 20 months, so it was still fresh in people's minds. I passed through the famous Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin and saw some of the war ruins still left standing. The images to be shown are a mixture of my own photos, pictures cut out of leaflets in my scrap book that I made up at the time, plus some downloaded images to illustrate past and more recent historical cold war incidences.

On a personal side I moved down with my wife to Ilminster in 2017. I am a member of Chard and Ilminster u3a Past Times History Group and gave a presentation to them about my Berlin experience. I joined a German conversation group which included Greg Atkins and also did a short presentation to the group.

I am also the auditor for Martock & District u3a annual accounts.

## Martock & District Accounts Update

The final figures for February 2024 show Income of £273.71, Expenditure of £326.27 with a total balance of £2,590.02. The Newsletter accounts update will now show the last complete month's figures (eg. February figures in April Newsletter, March in May etc). Please email the Treasurer on [treasmaru3@gmail.com](mailto:treasmaru3@gmail.com) if you would like more detail about the accounts.

The raffle at the February monthly meeting raised £42. This was donated by the speaker to Martock Youth Club.

## Martock & District Groups Update

If you wish to be or are a member of a Martock & District Group, **please note the following:**

1. To comply with the u3a Insurance Policy which covers Martock & District u3a, **all** members must be allocated to a Group by the Groups Secretary. Please do not approach a Group Leader directly; and
2. The u3a insurance does not provide personal accident cover and physically active group activities are undertaken at members' own risk.

## **STOP PRESS IF YOU ARE REGISTERED WITH Martock & South Petherton Surgeries .....**

Martock & South Petherton Surgeries expect to launch Anima — which will take over from askmyGP — on Wednesday 24 April. Signing up details will be shared with patients soon.

## Central u3a Update

The u3a movement is holding its first ever Festival in 2024, **18 - 20 July at the University of York**, where members will be running a wide variety of activities — talks, sporting events, musical entertainment and workshops which will make this u3a national festival something to remember. Bookings to attend will open soon.

Rooms on campus can now be booked and will be £61.80pp for bed and breakfast. They are all ensuite **single** rooms with tea and coffee making. There are no larger rooms available on site. Alternatively, you can book your own accommodation elsewhere in York and attend each day.

Tickets are not yet available to buy but the cost of the attending festival will be as follows:

- Day 1, Thursday 18 July - £25 including buffet supper
- Day 2, Friday 19 July - £10 for the full day
- Day 3, Saturday 20 July - £5 for a half day

Full festival to include all 3 days and a buffet supper on Day 1 - £35

Go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024> for more information, to sign up for

## Helpful Hints

### **In An Emergency .....**

Here are some things you can do to help the emergency services look after you:

- On your smart phone — whether Apple or android — in Settings there is a category Safety & Emergency (or similar). You can put your emergency contacts, medical history and medication details. **This can be accessed by emergency services even if you have a lock on your phone screen** — go to your unlock screen and press Emergency SOS to check!
- Also on your phone, you can enter a new contact called ICE (In Case of Emergency) in the first name and then add your emergency contacts names in the surname. This is another way emergency services can access your contacts' details.
- Download the 'what3words' app to your phone. This allows you to give emergency services — or errant delivery drivers! — your exact position to within 3 metres.
- At home — make a note of your personal & medical details etc, put the paper in a sealed jar marked 'emergencies' & put it on a shelf in the fridge — **emergency services look for this!**

## From a member .....

### **Writing by Larry Jeram-Croft**

My writing career started after spending several years sailing in the Caribbean with my wife. It was something I've always wanted to do. Before that, I had spent 30 years in the Royal Navy and another 10 in industry. As such, I was always writing reports and letters so I had an idea that I might be able to achieve something. I also get quite cross when I read books where it's quite clear the author hasn't a clue about the facts behind his narrative. 'Write about things you know about' is so true.

The Caribbean islands have amazing histories and I learnt about some of them when traveling there. So when I returned I wrote 'Jacaranda' the story of a large modern yacht that goes back in time to the Nelson era, in Antigua. I then embarked on an attempt to get an agent and publisher. After one less

rejection than JK Rowling, I decided to self publish which is what I do for all my books except two non fiction books which go through a specialist publishing house.

Jacaranda turned into a trilogy and when I looked at my military career, I reckoned there was enough for some novels about the modern RN and Fleet Air Arm, especially as no one seemed to be writing any at the time. The result was a 10 book series starting at the Falklands War. At one point I did contact an agent and ask if I should attempt to go back to the 'mainstream' publishing world. When I told him my sales figures, he was honest enough to say it would probably be a retrograde step. I can wax lyrical about the advantages of self publishing but there would not be room here. That said if anyone wishes to know more, please don't hesitate to contact me. Sticking with the 'write about what you know' principle I managed to acquire my father's WW2 service records and combat reports. He was an RN fighter pilot and flew with the RAF for the Battle of Britain before continuing to fly operationally until 1944. This allowed me to write another trilogy loosely based on his career. Strangely, these books suddenly got me into the American market which, as you can imagine, I am quite happy about. I also have several other stand alone books, including a short autobiography and a Science Fiction novel. Three of my books have been classified as best sellers on Amazon. My current project is about the Royal Naval Air Service in WW1 which is taking me longer than normal because of the amount of research that is needed. After that, I intend to return to write the second book in a series about Winchester. I wanted to do some murder mystery books and Inspector Morse killed everyone off in Oxford and anyway, I grew up in Winchester.

For my sins, I also run the Martock & District u3a writers' group which is great fun. We currently have a project writing a series of short stories about a fictional village on the Somerset levels called Blackney Foloren. We started this as a bit of an experiment but so far have managed one novella and are working on the second story. I find it amazing how, when we all get together, the ideas flow and how funny some of them are. I will say no more but would hope to publish a compendium book when we have finished and all proceeds will go to charity.

***Have you got any useful hints, information or experiences you think members will be interested in? Please send your ideas to Chris Atkins.***



## Martock & District u3a 2023-24 Committee

Chair – Chris Atkins [martocku3achair24@gmail.com](mailto:martocku3achair24@gmail.com) **Please note new email address**

Vice Chair –

Treasurer – Sue Roberts [treasmaru3a@gmail.com](mailto:treasmaru3a@gmail.com)

Secretary – Pat Brett [commaru3a@gmail.com](mailto:commaru3a@gmail.com)

Web Manager – Alison Bleasdale [webmaru3a@gmail.com](mailto:webmaru3a@gmail.com)

Groups Secretary – Mary Marshall [martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com](mailto:martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com)

Membership Secretary – Alison Sutton [martocku3amembership@gmail.com](mailto:martocku3amembership@gmail.com) or for information about membership please ring 07555 033027

Publicity & Events Secretary – Adrian Sutton [pubmaru3a@gmail.com](mailto:pubmaru3a@gmail.com)

Committee Member – Carol Youngson [comm4maru3a@gmail.com](mailto:comm4maru3a@gmail.com)

Committee Member – Philip Booth [comm5maru3a@gmail.com](mailto:comm5maru3a@gmail.com)

**The Committee welcomes feedback from members, by email to the Chair or the Secretary or through your Group Leader**

### April Facts and Legends ...

The word April comes from the Latin word aperire, which means to open. This is in reference to the many flowers that bloom in the month. Another theory is that the name could come from Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love.



*The two flowers of April are the daisy and sweet pea.*

*The birthstone is the diamond.*



Some historians believe that April Fools' Day started in 1582, when France switched to a different calendar. This meant that the start of their year used to be around 1st April, however it changed to 1st January. Some people accidentally celebrated new year in April and were called 'April fools'! In modern France they call it Poisson d'Avril and there is a tradition where they stick a paper fish on each others backs. They then shout "Poisson d'Avril" once it has been discovered! It translates to 'April Fish'.

*Lots of other things have happened in April:*

- *The first Olympics of the modern era started on 6*

*April 1896.*

- *On 14 April 1865, actor John Wilkes Booth fatally shot President Abraham Lincoln at the theatre.*
- *The Titanic hit the now famous iceberg on 15 April 1912.*
- *23 April is St George's Day. It's also the birth and death day of William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*

The arrival of the cuckoo some time in mid April is the signal that spring has come. It is said that the cuckoo sings from St. Tiburtius' Day to St John's Day (14 April to 24 June). However in Worcestershire there is a saying that the cuckoo is never heard before Tenbury fair (21 April) or after Pershore fair (26 June). The difference in dates is because traditionally the bird arrives in different parts of the UK during April. Various dates in April are called 'Cuckoo Day' and some places hold 'Cuckoo Fairs'.



However, over the past 50 years cuckoo populations have gone into decline across Europe and they are globally threatened. So treasure the experience if you hear one now, as cuckoos in the UK have reduced by 76%.